



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **ETNA FAMILY RECEIVES REPLACEMENT HOME THROUGH RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERS**

ETNA, February 28, 2006- It isn't every day people participate in a groundbreaking ceremony on their new home, but that is exactly what Thayne and Tatsiana Fields did, along with several organizations that made the moment possible. The Fields family has become proud new homeowners through Rural Development funding in partnership with Penquis Community Action Program's Replacement Home Program.

The family's 1975 trailer was no place to raise a family. The windows of the trailer were cracking and drafty, mold was growing in the ceilings and floors, and the roof leaked. But from a bleak situation, the family found hope through Rural Development, Penquis Community Action Program, and Ron Harriman Associates, who coordinated funding sources for the family to finance a new home. Funding was provided by Rural Development, Maine State Housing Authority through Penquis CAP Agency, and Community Development Block Grant funds through the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Their new home, expected to be move-in ready at the end of March, is a ranch house on a full poured foundation complete with all new appliances and landscaping. They look forward to a place they can be proud to call home and in which they will raise their one-year old daughter Nicola.

When Mr. Fields was asked what the home will mean to his family, he stated simply "A better life. I applied for a new heating system and got a new home."

Rural Development State Director Michael W. Aube said of the Program, "Rural Development's collaboration with community partners provides families with an opportunity to finance the dream of homeownership."

Funding and community partners attending included congressional representatives, Penquis Community Action Program Housing Developer Carlton Pinney, Etna Town Manager Evelyn Serval, and Ron Harriman of Ron Harriman Associates. They gathered with the family at the groundbreaking ceremony held in front of their new home.

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At the groundbreaking, Rural Development Area Director Raymond S. Roberts III said of the collaborative efforts “Partnerships are the wave of the future, and the future is *now*.”

According to Carlton Pinney, there are approximately 6,900 families living in trailers manufactured before 1978, and many more living in substandard housing. The Replacement Home Program may be an option for many low and very-low income rural Maine residents. Rural Development has helped 25 families obtain homeownership through the Replacement Home Program since the Program’s inception in 2003. Six-hundred eighty-four people obtained or maintained homeownership in Fiscal Year 2005 through Rural Development’s housing programs. For more information on Rural Development’s housing programs, please call the Bangor Area Office at 990-3676 ext. 4, or visit our website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me/>.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural communities. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development has invested over \$63 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration to provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Over 1.1 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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